

Claims 1-7 cancelled.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method of forming a filter cartridge, comprising the steps of:

supporting a porous filter element at a central portion thereof;

transferring the filter element to an end cap application station;

automatically placing a pair of metal end caps, having an adhesive therein,

on opposite ends of said filter element at substantially a ~~first~~ same time using said end cap application station;

transferring the filter element to an inductive heating station; ~~and at a first location and then heating the~~ said pair of metal end caps by inductive heating, thereby partially curing said adhesive in said pair of metal end caps to bond said pair of metal end caps to opposing ends of said filter element; and

heating said pair of metal end caps in a cure oven at a second location to substantially cure said adhesive in said pair of metal end caps disposed on said filter element.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, ~~further comprising the steps of wherein the step of heating the end caps in the cure oven comprises:~~

transferring the filter element, with attached end caps, to a ~~final~~ cure conveyor; and

moving the filter element, on the ~~final~~ cure conveyor, through a ~~final~~ the cure oven.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 9, wherein said filter element is rotated from a substantially horizontal orientation to a substantially vertical orientation thereof during the step of transferring the filter element with the attached end caps.

Claims 11-14 cancelled.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A method of forming a filter cartridge, comprising:

providing a filter element;
transferring said filter element to an end cap application station;
disposing an adhesive on a pair of metal end caps;
automatically placing said pair of metal end caps on opposite ends of said filter element at substantially a ~~first~~ same time using said end cap application station;
automatically transferring the filter element to an inductive heating station at a first location using a transfer device; ~~and then~~ heating said pair of metal end caps by inductive heating to partially cure said adhesive, wherein said pair of metal end caps are bonded to said filter element; ~~and~~
heating said pair of metal end caps in a cure oven at a second location to substantially cure said adhesive in said pair of metal end caps disposed on said filter element.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method as in claim 15, wherein the step of heating said pair of metal end caps by inductive heating is performed by a pair of inductive heating assemblies one for each end cap.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method as in claim 16, wherein said pair of inductive heating assemblies prevents bonding of said pair of end caps to said pair of inductive heating assemblies.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method as in claim 16, wherein said pair of inductive heating assemblies are configured to move simultaneously in opposite directions.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method as in claim 16, wherein said pair of inductive heating assemblies incorporate electromagnetic field generators.

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Claim 20 (previously presented): The method as in claim 19, wherein said pair of inductive heating assemblies induce current flow within said pair of end caps during said heating step.

Claim 21 (cancelled)

Claim 22 (cancelled);

Claim 23 (cancelled);

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method as in claim 15, wherein said filter element is substantially cylindrical.

Claim 25 (currently amended): The method as in claim 15, wherein said heating said pair of end caps by inductive heating includes applying a high-frequency electromagnetic field proximate each end cap to induce current flow within each end cap that generates heat within each end cap.

Claim 26 (currently amended): A method of securing a pair of end caps to a filter element, comprising:

- transferring the filter element to an end cap application station;
- disposing an adhesive on the pair of end caps;
- automatically placing the pair of end caps on opposite ends of the filter element at substantially a first-same time using said end cap application station; and
- heating the pair of end caps at a first location to partially cure said adhesive to bond the pair of end caps to the filter element by applying a high-frequency electromagnetic field around each end cap to induce current flow within each end cap that generates heat within each end cap; and
- heating said pair of end caps in a cure oven at a second location to substantially cure said adhesive in said pair of end caps disposed on said filter element.